

August 10, 2000

Mr. Greg Sanders
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura CA 93003

Dear Mr. Sanders:

I am writing to express my strong support for The Otter Project's request that the USFWS:

- 1) immediately declare the sea otter translocation to San Nicolas Island a failure;
- 2) eliminate the designated "no otter zone;" and
- 3) allow sea otters in the San Nicolas Island and in the zone to remain.

The reasons for my support are as follows:

- 1) The translocation of sea otters to San Nicolas Island has failed and should be discontinued. If sea otters are removed from either San Nicolas Island or from the "no-otter zone," they will very likely return.
- 2) Moving sea otter populations is often lethal; the populations are now so low, it puts them at great risk to disrupt their locations. Repeated removal of sea otters from the no-otter zone will result in mortality and a tragic and irreversible drain upon the parent population. The need for the San Nicolas translocation effort to protect against oil spills should be re-evaluated in light of recent developments.
- 3) The no-otter zone has been ineffectual at protecting shellfish populations that have declined due to over-fishing and disease.
- 4) Recovery of sea otters is unlikely without re-habitation of the waters south of Point Conception. Exclusion of sea otters from the "no-otter zone" is exceedingly expensive and does not appear to be an effective use of taxpayer money.

I feel very strongly that the California coastal waters should first and foremost be preserved for the creatures that live on and in the water. The sea otter has been one of the most threatened species, and no actions should be taken that could put the sea otters at risk. In my view, it would be criminal to fail to support habitats for the preservation of the small populations of sea otters that make their home along our coastline.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,



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